



ENVIRONMENT OREGON Your Winter Report

Meet the bees your action is helping to save

From half-inch honeybees to the endangered rusty patched bumblebee, the best pollinators need our help. Across the country, bee populations are dropping, sometimes at alarming rates. No matter their size or status, these pollinators face a triple threat of bee-killing pesticides, habitat loss and climate change.

If we're going to save the bees, we'll need the whole Environment Oregon hive behind us. Let's meet some of the bees your action is helping to save:

Native bees

Our country's more than 4,000 native bee species are "specialists" in their field—they're perfectly suited to pollinate only a few specific plants or flowers. The Southeastern blueberry bee, for example, is one hard-working pollinator—visiting as many as 50,000 blueberry flowers and helping to produce up to 6,000 blueberries in its short life.

The squash bee is another specialist (and an early riser, too). In the hours after sunrise, you'll find them hard at work, buzzing from flower to flower as they gather nectar and pollinate zucchini and butternut squash. By noon, they'll be fast asleep napping on some flowers.

Most native bees are also highly independent. After a long day of flying solo from flower to flower, these busy bees retire to the nests that they dug or built themselves.



(Clockwise from top left): One Southeastern blueberry bee can help produce up to 6,000 blueberries. Squash bees like to nap on flowers. Only an estimated 471 rusty patched bumblebees remain. Up to 60,000 honeybees can live in one hive.

Honeybees

Honeybees are non-native, but they're some of the sweetest, most social pollinators. Their colonies are also filled with hard workers: In just one year, a colony can make up to 100 pounds of honey. When they're on duty, honeybees can fly to 100 flowers in a single trip—adding up to thousands of flower visits each day.

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Thanks for making it all possible

More state wins on the road to renewable energy

Illinois, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine are among the latest states to advance commitments to renewable energy.

On Aug. 19, our national partner Environment America released “The United States of Clean Energy,” a summary of clean energy progress made in state legislatures during this year’s spring and summer sessions. While noting backsliding in some states, the round-



Our staff are building grassroots support for slashing plastic waste in Oregon, one conversation at a time.

up featured state victories such as Oregon’s 100% clean power commitment, Massachusetts’ strengthened renewable electricity requirements, and new energy storage goals in Connecticut and Maine.

“Whenever I’m feeling pessimistic about the slow pace of change in the halls of our federal government, I look to the states,” said Emma Searson, our national network’s 100% Renewable campaign director. “We’re not just seeing the steady march of progress, but a real race to the top when it comes to clean and renewable energy.”

Oregon became the eighth state to commit to renewable electricity in 2021. Now, we’re on track to reach 100% clean energy by 2040.

Is there trouble in your air? For 1 in 6 Americans, there is.

More than 58.4 million Americans experienced at least 100 days of polluted air in 2020.

That was the finding of the 2021 edition of the “Trouble in the Air” report, released by our national research partner Environment America Research & Policy Center on

Oct. 5. Here in Oregon, nearly 3 million people experienced at least 55 days of elevated air pollution according to the report. Air pollution increases the risk of premature death, asthma attacks and cancer.

“Even one day of breathing in polluted air is dangerous for our health,” said Jessie Kochaver, campaign associate with Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center. “Fifty-five days is unacceptable and we need to do more to deliver cleaner air for our communities.”

But it doesn’t have to be that way. While the report finds that air pollution problems persist across the country, the solutions for cleaning up our air are readily achievable if policymakers act swiftly to zero out fossil fuels from all aspects of our lives.

Oregon passes nation’s second-ever producer responsibility law

For decades, Oregonians and our environment have paid the price for plastic pollution. A new law shifts some of that cost to producers of all this plastic waste.

On Aug. 6, Gov. Kate Brown signed our nation’s second-ever producer responsibility bill into law.

The legislation will require plastics producers to cover some of the costs of managing the waste their products become and will also update the state’s recycling system.

The passage of Oregon and Maine’s producer responsibility laws this summer signals a shift to one of the most effective ways to remedy our plastic crisis.

“For years, producers of wasteful single-use plastic products have somehow avoided paying up,” said Environment Oregon State Director Celeste Meiffren-Swango. “This law begins to change that by requiring producers to start bearing some of the costs of the waste management system.”

In the next legislative session, Environment Oregon will champion policies that promise reduced production of the single-use plastics polluting our environment.

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentoregon.org>.



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After eight-hour workdays, honeybees go to rest with up to 60,000 family members.

The rusty patched bumblebee

There’s only one type of native bee that is truly social: bumblebees. And under the bumblebee umbrella is the rusty patched bumblebee. Known for their rust-colored backs, they made headlines after becoming the first bee in the continental United States to land on the endangered species list. Now, only an estimated 471 remain.

These bumblebees won’t be last to be listed as endangered if we don’t act. The worst threats facing bees today?

Climate change: As temperatures rise, flowers bloom earlier, which creates a mismatch in timing between when flowers produce pollen and when bees can feed on that pollen.

Habitat loss: As climate change and human development make bee habitat unlivable, bees have fewer flowers to forage and nowhere to lay eggs or raise their young.

Bee-killing pesticides: A pervasive, dangerous class of bee-killing pesticides called neonicotinoids poisons baby bees’ brains, disrupts bees’ sleep, alters foraging, and diminishes bees’ ability to reproduce.

Bees are in crisis. And with native bees pollinating 80% of Earth’s flowering plants, losing bees could be the first domino in a chain of extinctions. So we’re working to ban the worst bee-killing pesticides, restore bee habitat, and get Amazon to protect bees.

As of Oct. 1, more than 47,000 supporters of our national network have urged Amazon to stop selling bee-killing pesticides. If you haven’t already, you can call on Amazon too by going to this link and adding your name: <http://environmentoregon.org/savebees>

Our canvassers have gone door to door rallying supporters like you to call on Amazon to stop selling bee-killing pesticides.



USFWS via Flickr/CCO



Kimball Nelson

Thanks to you, this fall we’ve been able to protect our wildlife and wild places while improving our chances at achieving that cleaner, greener future we all want. In this issue, you’ll learn more about the critical campaigns you’ve helped and the causes you’ve advanced. Thanks for making it all possible.

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director

Staff

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Your Winter Report

Our mission:

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Oregon, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus exclusively on protecting Oregon's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Lawsuit filed to protect polar bears in Alaska

Polar bears roam throughout the northern part of Alaska, on land and at sea, and far beyond their denning habitat in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

On Sept. 16, our national partners at Environment America joined the law firm Trustees for Alaska and other environmental groups in filing a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect polar bears from oil and gas drilling. Our lawsuit challenges a regulation that would allow oil and gas companies to undertake drilling

and exploration activities that would harm the threatened polar bears in the Beaufort Sea and on the North Slope.

"Polar bears are already struggling simply to survive," said Steve Blackledge, our national network's senior conservation program director. "When new oil drilling proposals further threaten these magnificent animals, it's critical that we hold federal agencies accountable to the laws intended to ensure their survival. Extinction, after all, can't be rectified."

Our Conservation team hopes that the courts will find that the regulation doesn't offer sufficient protection for polar bears, forcing the agency to issue a new rule that is far more protective of polar bears.

Across the country, supporters submitted photo petitions in support of protecting the Arctic and its polar bear population.

Photos courtesy of Environment America supporters

